

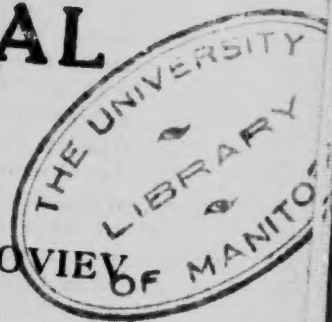
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# THE MANIFESTO OF THE MOSCOW INTERNATIONAL

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Signed by  
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and RAKOVSKY

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The present translation of the Manifesto of the Moscow (Third) International is published by the Educational Press Association, in order to make available to the general body of Socialists a document of great interest and importance.

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## Manifesto of the Moscow International.

(TRANSLATION)

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**T**O THE PROLETARIAT OF THE WHOLE WORLD.

Seventy-two years have gone by since the Communist Party of the world announced their programme in the form of a manifesto drawn up by the great teachers of the proletarian revolution, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. Even at that time Communism, which had barely entered the arena of battle, was beset with the snares, lies, hatred and contempt of the possessing classes, who rightly judged it to be their deadly enemy. In the course of these seventy years the development of Communism has proceeded in a tortuous manner: there have been furious advances, but also epochs of depression; successes and severe defeats. At bottom the development has followed the lines laid down in the Manifesto of the Communist Party. The period of the last decisive struggle has come later than was expected and desired by the apostles of the Social Revolution. But it has set in. We Communists, the representatives of the revolutionary proletariat of the various countries of Europe, America and Asia, assembled in the Moscow Soviet, feel and regard ourselves as those who have inherited the Cause, the programme of which was announced 72 years ago, and who will bring it to fruition. Our tasks consist in the co-ordination of the revolutionary experience of the working class, the purging of the movement of the elements of opportunism and socialist-patriotism which have mingled in it, the gathering together of the strength of all really revolutionary parties of the world-proletariat, thereby facilitating and hastening the triumph of the Communist Revolution.

In the course of a long series of years Socialism has predicted the inevitability of the imperialist war, and, in particular, has described the causes of this war in the insatiable ambition of the two chief groups of the possessing classes, as well as of those in all capitalist countries. Two years before the outbreak of war the responsible Socialist leaders of all countries, at the Basle Congress, branded Imperialism as the author of the future war, and threatened the bourgeoisie with the Socialist Revolution

as the retribution which the proletariat would visit on it for the crimes of Imperialism. Now, after the experience of five years, after history has discovered the robbery-lust of Germany, no less than it has revealed the criminal actions of the *Entente* countries, the State Socialists of the *Entente* countries continue, together with their Governments, to unmask the fallen German Emperor. And the social patriots of Germany, who in August, 1914, declared the White Book of the Hohenzollerns to be the holiest gospel of the people, now in vulgar flattery, together with the Socialists of the *Entente* countries, blame the fallen German monarchy, which formerly they served like slaves, as the chief culprit. In this way they hope to cause their own guilt to be forgotten, and to deserve the good will of the victors. But by the side of the fallen dynasties of the Romanoffs, the Hohenzollerns, and the Hapsburgs, and the capitalist cliques of these countries, the Governments of France, England, Italy and the United States appear, in the light of the unfolding events and the diplomatic revelations, in all their immeasurable vileness.

Up to the very outbreak of war, British diplomacy preserved a mysterious secrecy. Civil authorities were careful not to make it known that they intended to take part in the war on the side of the *Entente*, doubtless so as not to alarm the Berlin Government and put off the war. London wanted war; hence their action to make Berlin and Vienna build their hopes on England's neutrality, while Paris and Petrograd were sure of England's intervention.

The war, which had been prepared for decades, broke out through direct and conscious provocation on the part of Great Britain. The British Government reckoned on giving support to Russia and France until they were exhausted and at the same time had crushed Germany, their mortal enemy. But the strength of the German military machine proved too formidable, and called forth not only an apparent but an actual intervention in the war on the part of England. It was the military superiority of Germany that caused the Government at Washington to give up their apparent neutrality. The United States assumed, as regards Europe, the same part that England had played in former wars, and has tried to play to the last, namely, the plan of weakening the one side with the help of the other, by joining in military operations for the sole purpose of securing for themselves all the advantages of the situation. Based on the American tombola method, Wilson's stake was not high, but it was the last, and he won.

By reason of the war the contradictions of the capitalist order have become for mankind the animal pangs of hunger and cold, and epidemics of moral savagery. The academic quarrel of Socialists over the theory of impoverishment, and the undermining of Capitalism by Socialism, has thereby been finally decided. Statisticians and pedants of the theory of the reconciling of contradictions have for some decades been at pains to collect from all parts of the world real and apparent facts which testify to the improvement in the welfare of various groups and categories of the working class. To-day the impoverishment faces us, not only of a social but also of a physiological kind, in all its frightful reality.

Finance capital, which mankind has thrown in the abyss of war, has itself suffered catastrophic changes in the course of the war. The dependence of paper money on the material basis of production is completely destroyed. While losing more and more its significance as means and regulator of the circulation of capitalist commodities, paper money is transformed into a means for requisition for robbery, especially of social-military administration. The complete degeneration of paper money reflects the universal death throes of the capitalist exchange of commodities. If free competition as the regulator of production and distribution in the chief social spheres had been supplanted by the system of trusts and monopolies during the decades preceding the war, so the progress of the war snatched the direction of things from the hands of the economic associations and delivered it straight into the hands of the power of the military States. The distribution of raw materials, the utilisation of the petroleum of Baku or Roumania, of the coal of Donetz, of the wheat of Ukraine, the fate of the German locomotives, railways and automobiles, the provisioning of hungry Europe with bread and meat—all these vital questions of the social life of the world were not regulated by free competition, or by associations of national and international trusts, but by the direct employment of military power in the interest of its continued existence. If the complete subjection of the State power to the power of finance capital has led mankind to the imperialist shambles, this gigantic massacre has not only militarised the State, but also finance capital itself, which is no longer capable to fulfil its essential economic functions except by means of blood and iron.

The Opportunists, who, before the war, counselled the workers to moderation, in the name of the gradual transition to Socialism, who, during the war, demanded

of them submission in the name of social peace and defence of the Fatherland, again ask the proletariat to practise self-denial to overcome the terrible consequences of the war. If these preachers find acceptance amongst the masses of workers, capitalist development will go on for several generations in new and more concentrated and fearful forms, with the prospect of a fresh and inescapable world-war. Fortunately for mankind this is no longer possible.

The State control of social life, against which capitalist Liberalism so strives, is become a reality. There is no turning back, either to free competition or to the domination of trusts, syndicates, and other kinds of social anomalies. The question consists solely in this: Who shall control State production in the future—the imperialist State or the State of the victorious proletariat? In other words: Is the whole of labouring humanity to become the bond slaves of the victorious bourgeoisie, who, in the name of the League of Nations, and with the aid of an "international" army, and an "international" fleet, here plunders and strangles, there throws some crumbs, but everywhere holds the proletariat in chains, with the sole object of preserving its dominance; or shall the working class take in hand the disordered and ruined society in order to ensure its reconstruction on Socialist lines?

It is only possible to shorten the duration of the present crisis by the means of proletarian dictatorship, which neither considers inherited privileges nor the rights of property, but proceeds from the necessity of saving the hungry masses, mobilises all means and strength to this end, introduces universal obligation to labour, establishes the regime of labour discipline, in order, by this means, in the course of a few years, not only to heal the gaping wounds which the war has inflicted, but also to lift mankind on to a new and unsuspected level.

The national State, to which capitalist development has given a powerful impulse, is become too narrow for the further development of the productive forces. All the more precarious will the situation of the small States scattered amongst the great Powers of Europe and other parts of the world become.

These small States, which at various times have arisen as fragments of large States, as small change for the payment of various services rendered, and as strategical buffers, have their dynasties, their ruling sects, their imperialist pretensions, and their political machinery. Until the war their illusory independence had the same sub-



stance as the European balance of power, viz., the uninterrupted antagonism of the two imperialist camps.

The war has destroyed this balance of power. While in the beginning of the war Germany received a powerful preponderance, she obliged the small States to seek their welfare and salvation under the wings of German militarism. After Germany was defeated, the bourgeoisie of the small States, together with their patriotic "Socialists," turned to the victorious imperialism of the Allies, and began to look for security for their continued existence in the hypocritical points of the Wilson programme.

At the same time the number of the small States increased; from the constituent parts of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, and from the portions of the Czarist Empire, new States separated themselves, which, scarcely born into the world, sprang at each other's throats over the question of boundaries.

Meanwhile, the allied imperialists prepared such combinations of new and old small States as would be bound to themselves through the hold of reciprocal hate and general impotence.

While manipulating the small and weak peoples, and giving them over to hunger and humiliation, the *Entente* imperialists do not cease, exactly as did quite recently the imperialists of the Central Powers, to talk of the right to self-determination of the peoples who by this time are as completely crushed in Europe as in the other parts of the world.

The small peoples can only be assured of the possibility of existence by the Proletarian Revolution, which will free the productive forces of all countries from the fetters of the national States, unite the peoples in the closest social co-operation on the basis of a universal social economy, and give to even the smallest and weakest people the possibility of guiding the affairs of its national civilisation, without harm to the united and centralised economy of Europe and of the whole world.

The recent war, which was, in the last resort, a war on account of colonies, was at the same time a war waged with the help of colonies. To an extent never before equalled the population of the colonies were drawn into the European War. Indians, Negroes, Arabs, Madagascans fought on the European continent—why?—for the right to remain the serfs of England or France.

Never did capitalist domination show itself so shameless, never did the problem of African slavery present itself in such sharpness as now. In Europe itself, Ireland

remembered in bloody street fights that it was still an enslaved land, and feels as such. In Madagascar, in Annam, and in other countries the troops of the bourgeois republic have had, during the war, to suppress more than one revolt of colonial slaves. The revolutionary movement in India has not once come to a halt, and lately it developed into the biggest labour strike in Asia, which the Government of Great Britain answered with the work of the armoured cars.

In this way the colonial question in all its bearings is not only placed on the green table of the Congress of Diplomats in Paris, but is also part of the order of the day in the colonies themselves. The Wilson programme, at the most, only aims at an alteration of the name-plate of colonial slavery. The emancipation of the colonies is only possible in conjunction with the emancipation of the working class of the mother countries. The workers and peasants, not only of Annam, Algiers, and Bengal, but also of Persia and Armenia, will only reach the possibility of an independent existence when the workers of England and France have overthrown Lloyd George and Clemenceau, and taken into their hands the power of the State. In the more developed colonies the present struggle no longer proceeds merely under the banner of national freedom, but takes on at the same time an openly expressed social character. If capitalist Europe has forcibly drawn into the capitalist whirlpool the backward parts of the world, Socialist Europe will come to the aid of the emancipated colonies, with its technical skill, its organisation, its intellectual influence, in order to facilitate their transition to a systematically organised Socialist economy.

Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will also be the hour of your emancipation.

## II.

The whole bourgeois world blames the Communists for the destruction of freedom and of political democracy. This is not true. On achieving sovereignty, the proletariat only makes it completely impossible to employ the methods of bourgeois democracy, and creates the conditions and forms of a higher democracy of labour. The whole course of capitalist development has undermined, especially in the recent imperialist epoch, political democracy, not only by dividing the nations into two irreconcilable classes, but also by condemning numerous sections

of the small middle-class and semi-proletariat, as well as the lower strata of the proletariat, to permanent social misery and political impotence.

The working class of those countries in which the historical development has given them that possibility has made use of the system of political democracy for organisation against Capital. The same thing will further happen in those countries where the pre-requisites to a labour revolution are not yet ripened. . . .

But Capitalism hampers the historical development of the large middle sections on the flat land and in the towns, and they remain a whole epoch behind. The Bavarian peasant, who cannot see beyond his village steeple; the small French vine grower, ruined by the wine adulteration practised by large capital; the American small farmer, plundered and swindled by bankers and representatives: all these social sections, which are diverted by Capitalism from the main stream of development, are called on paper to the government of the State, under the regime of political democracy. In reality, however, all important questions which settle the destinies of peoples are decided behind the back of Parliamentary democracy by the financial oligarchy. This was so above all in the question of the war. The same thing is now happening in the question of the peace.

If the financial oligarchy considers it to be useful to cover their violence by Parliamentary sanction, the bourgeois State has at its disposal, for the achievement of the required object, all the means which have been inherited from previous centuries of class domination, multiplied by technical skill—lies, demagoguery, calumny, snares, bribery, and terror. To ask of the proletariat that, in the last struggle with Capitalism, when it is a matter of life and death, it should, lamb-like, comply with the requirements of bourgeois democracy is like demanding of a man who is defending his life and existence against robbers that he should follow the fencing rules of the French ring, which have been framed by his enemy, who does not himself follow them.

In this region of destruction, where not only the means of production and transport, but also the institutions of political democracy exhibit bloody ruins, the proletariat must create its own machinery, to serve, above all, as cement for the working class, and to assure for it the possibility of a revolutionary influence on the further development of mankind. This machinery is the worker's councils. The old parties, the old trade unions, have in the persons



of their leaders proved incapable of understanding the tasks imposed by the new epoch, to say nothing of carrying them out. The proletariat created a new form of machinery, which comprised the whole of the working class, irrespective of calling and political intelligence, an elastic apparatus, which is capable of constantly renewing and extending itself, which is always attracting to its orbit new sections, and which opens its doors to the labouring sections of the town and country which stand close to the proletariat. This indispensable organisation for the self-government of the working class will be put to the test in its struggles and in the future conquest of various countries, and represents the greatest achievement and the most powerful weapon of the proletariat of our time.

In all countries where the masses are mentally awake, Workers, Soldiers and Peasants' Councils will be formed. To strengthen and elevate the Councils, and to oppose them to the State machinery of the bourgeoisie—that is now the chief task of the class-conscious and honest workers of all countries. By means of the Councils the working class will be able to save itself from the decomposition set up in their midst by the hell-tortures of the war and of hunger, and by the violence of the possessing classes and the treason of their former leaders. By means of the Councils the working class will the most surely and easily attain to power in all countries where the Councils constitute the majority of the labouring population. By means of the Councils the working class which has attained to power will administer every sphere of economic and cultural life, as is already the case in Russia at this moment.

The collapse of the imperialist State, from the Czarist State to the most democratic ones, takes place simultaneously with the collapse of the imperialist military system. The armies of millions mobilised by Imperialism could only be maintained so long as the proletariat remained obediently under the yoke of the bourgeoisie. The falling to pieces of national unity signified also an inevitable falling to pieces of the army. Thus it happened first in Russia, then in Austria-Hungary and Germany. The revolt of the peasants against the landlords, of the workers against the capitalists, of both against the monarchical or "democratic" bureaucracy, leads unerringly to the revolt of the soldiers against the commanders, and further to a sharp cleavage between the proletarian and the bourgeois elements of the army. The imperialist war, which pitted one nation against the other, passes into civil war, which pits one class against the other.

The wail of the bourgeois world against the civil war and the red terror is the most monstrous hypocrisy which the history of political struggles has hitherto revealed. There would have been no civil war if the exploiters who have brought mankind to the brink of destruction had not opposed every step forward of the labouring masses, if they had not plotted conspiracies and murders and summoned armed assistance from without, in order to maintain or re-establish their predatory privileges. The working class has been forced into civil war by its arch-enemy. The working class must answer blow with blow, if it is not to renounce itself and its future, which is equally the future of all mankind. While the Communist parties have never artificially conjured up the civil war, they endeavour to shorten its duration as far as possible, to decrease the number of sacrifices, and above all to assure victory to the proletariat. From this will be understood the necessity for the opportune disarming of the bourgeoisie, the arming of the workers, the formation of a Communist army to protect the power of the proletariat and the integrity of its social construction. Such a one is the Red Army of Soviet Russia, which arose to protect the achievements of the working class against any attack from within or without. The Soviet Army is inseparable from the Soviet State.

Conscious of the world-historical character of their tasks, the enlightened workers aimed at an international union even in the first stages of their organised Socialist movement. Its foundation stone was laid in London in 1864 with the first International. The Franco-German War, out of which arose the Germany of the Hohenzollerns, undermined the first International, although at the same time it gave an impetus to the development of the national Labour Parties. In the year 1889 these parties came together in the Congress of Paris, and created the organisation of the Second International. But at this period the centre of gravity of the Labour movement lay wholly on the ground of nationality, in the orbit of the national States, on the basis of national industry, and in the sphere of national Parliamentarism. Decades of work devoted to organisation and reform created a generation of leaders, the majority of whom gave lip service to the programme of the Social Revolution, but denied it in reality, and sunk in the morass of reformism and conformity with the bourgeois State. The opportunist character of the leading parties in the Second International finally threw off disguise and led to the greatest collapse in the history of the world, at a moment when the course of events demanded revolutionary methods of struggle from

the Labour Parties. Whereas the war of 1870 dealt a blow to the First International, inasmuch as it revealed the fact that behind the social-revolutionary programme there was as yet little decisive energy on the part of the masses, the war of 1914 killed the Second International, inasmuch as it showed that above the massed ranks of Labour stood parties which had been transformed into subservient organs of the bourgeois State.

This refers not only to the social patriots, who have to-day passed over openly to the camp of the bourgeoisie, and have become its favoured confidential agents and reliable hangmen of the working class, but also to the vanishing and precarious Socialist centre, which is now striving to rejuvenate the Second International, that is, the weakness, the opportunism, and the revolutionary impotence of their leading figures. The Independent Party of Germany, the present majority of the French Socialist Party, the Russian Menshevik group, the Independent Labour Party of England, and other similar groups are actually endeavouring to occupy the position which was filled before the war by the old, official parties of the Second International, while they are as busy as formerly with ideas of compromise and unity, by this means paralysing the energy of the proletariat, protracting the crisis, and increasing the misery of Europe. The struggle against the Socialist centre is the necessary condition for the successful struggle against Imperialism.

While we repudiate the inadequacy, falsehoods and corruption of the obsolete official Socialist parties, we united Communists in the Third International feel ourselves to be the direct inheritors of the heroic endeavours and martyrdoms of a long line of revolutionary generations, from Baboeuf to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxembourg. While the First International foresaw the future development and prescribed its course; while the Second International gathered together and organised millions of proletarians, so the Third International is the International of open mass action, of revolutionary realisation, the International of deed. Socialist critics have sufficiently branded the bourgeois world order. The task of the International Communist Party consists in overturning this order, to erect in its place the structure of the Socialist order. We summon the working men and women of all countries to unite under the Communist banner, under whose sign the first great victory has already been won.

Proletarians of all countries! Unite in the fight against Imperialist barbarity, against the monarchies, against the privileged orders, against the bourgeois State

and bourgeois property, against all forms and kinds of social or national oppression.

Under the banner of the Workers' Councils, of the revolutionary struggle for power and the dictatorship of the proletariat, under the banner of the Third International, proletarians of all countries—unite!

RAKOVSKY, LENIN, ZINOVIEV,  
TROTZKY, PLATTEN.

*Moscow,*

*2-6 March, 1919.*

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